



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **SENATE APPROVES \$18 MILLION FOR RI TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS**

**WASHINGTON, DC** – The Senate today approved the Fiscal Year 2002 Transportation Appropriations Conference Report, which would provide \$18 million in funding for five Rhode Island projects supported by Senator Lincoln Chafee. The bill has already been approved by the House and only requires the president's signature.

Specifically, the bill includes funding for the Pawtucket – TF Green commuter rail facility (\$5 million), repair of the Washington Bridge (\$5 million), the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA) (\$4.5 million), extension of the Blackstone River Bikeway (\$1.5 million), and Job Access and Reverse Commute Grants (\$2 million).

“This \$18 million in transportation funding will help solve transportation problems of today while also looking ahead to prevent transportation crises of the future,” said Chafee. “Funding in this bill will pave the way for much needed repairs on the Washington Bridge, and will ensure expansion of commuter rail and bus service throughout the Ocean State.”

On April 30<sup>th</sup>, Chafee wrote to Senator Richard Shelby (R-AL), then Chairman of the Senate Transportation Appropriations Subcommittee, to request funding for the projects.

The Transportation Appropriations bill is one of 13 spending bills approved by Congress each year. It includes funding for agencies including the Department of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the U.S. Coast Guard, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), and the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA).

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#### Pawtucket Train Maintenance and Layover Facility (\$5 million)

This facility will be used to increase commuter rail service on the Providence-Boston corridor, which ultimately will be extended to T.F. Green Airport in Warwick. The \$5 million in federal funding would allow the Rhode Island Department of Transportation to continue its work on the rehabilitation of this rail yard in Pawtucket.

#### Washington Bridge (\$5 million)

The Washington Bridge section of Interstate 195 carries traffic in excess of 90,000 vehicles a day and is the most heavily traveled segments of the interstate system within Rhode Island. The \$5 million in federal funding will be used to repair the Washington Bridge – and supporting ramps – which carries Interstate 195 traffic easterly from Providence to East Providence over the Seekonk River.

#### RIPTA Transit and Commuter Bus System (\$4.5 million)

This \$4.5 million in federal funding will enable the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA) to replace its aging transit buses and commuter bus coaches and to expand flex-route services with para-transit vehicles. Funding also will be used for an alternative fuels expansion hybrid program for an airport shuttle service, as well as for the expansion of flexible bus service in Rhode Island.

#### Blackstone River Bikeway (\$1.5 million)

This \$1.5 million in federal funding will allow the state to continue the construction of the Blackstone River Bikeway, an eighteen mile bicycle and pedestrian facility along the Blackstone River and the original route of the Blackstone River Canal between Providence and Woonsocket. These funds will assist in the construction of Segment 4A of this project, a one mile section from Cumberland to Lincoln, which includes construction of the Lonsdale Marsh Boardwalk.

#### Job Access/Reverse Commute Grants (\$2 million)

The U.S. Department of Transportation's Job Access/Reverse Commute program funds projects that connect welfare recipients and other low-income persons to jobs and other support services. Specifically, a Job Access project is one that would transport welfare recipients and eligible low-income individuals to and from jobs and activities related to their employment. The grant may include capital items or the cost of operating service.

Reverse Commute projects are related to the development of transportation services designed to transport residents from urban areas, urbanized areas, and non-urbanized areas to suburban employment opportunities. Eligible projects include subsidizing costs associated with adding reverse commute service or subsidizing the purchase or lease of shuttle vehicles.

Congress allocates a certain amount of Job Access/Reverse Commute funding to each state. Rhode Island will receive \$2 million.

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